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Selling Anthropocene space: situated adventures in sustainable tourism

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ABSTRACT

The Anthropocene is a proposed technical term for a new geological timeframe, but it is also a conceptual tool with the potential to redefine the stakes of contemporary environmental politics. One facet that is often overlooked is that the Anthropocene is a concept with commercial potential, even if the term itself has not been widely adopted. This article presents an investigation of the commercial potential of the Anthropocene idea through the lens of self-described sustainable tourism ventures in The Bahamas. These examples demonstrate some of the ways in which Anthropocene imaginaries participate in the recreation, redesign, and rebranding of specific spaces as emergent "tourism products", specifically the small island farm and the anthropogenic coral reef. The goal is twofold: (1) to explore the symbolic and material creativity of the Anthropocene idea as its themes are used to extend capitalist innovation, and (2) to examine the Anthropocene idea as a strategy that builds upon existing histories of inequality to enable transnational accumulation in particular locales. As a situated adventure, this article articulates a reflexive mode of political ecological research for the Anthropocene that is equipped to critically articulate emergent practices at the intersection of postcolonial tourism, environmental conservation, and sustainable development.

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Introduction: from Paradise island to Anthropocene island

It's an unusually overcast day on the island of New Providence, the most populated island of the Bahamian archipelago. I find myself far from the cruise ships and congestion of Nassau, and far from the beaches and hotels that skirt the coast. I am "way out west" on, of all places, a small farm, my feet planted firmly in the dirt. The air smells faintly of arugula, and it is still quite warm despite the clouds. I find myself far from the beaten path out on the farm because I am exploring emergent forms of self-described "sustainable tourism" in The Bahamas to understand the early effects of recent geographical imaginaries on the country's physical space and cultural politics.

To know how far this farm is from the standard form of Bahamian "tourism product", one needs to know about The Bahamas and Bahamian tourism.[1] The Bahamas is a former British colony and Caribbean archipelago of 700 islands and cays, with a population approaching 380,000. In 2010, ninety percent of the population identified as black, descended from enslaved peoples.

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Over 250,000 people live on New Providence, the seat of the nation's urban capital, Nassau.[2] New Providence is also the site of the majority of tourist arrivals to the country, numbering in the millions annually, and the site of the country's largest hotels and resorts.[3] In The Bahamas, tourism comprises 48% of the GDP, making it the ninth most tourism dependent country in the world relative to its size (WTTC, 2017). This is the culmination of decades of strong marketing campaigns made by the Bahamian tourism industry, institutionalized within the Bahamian government in the form of the Ministry of Tourism (Cleare, 2007).

Howie and Lewis explain that, "the idea of geographical 'imaginaries' is an attempt to capture not only that there are multiple geographical imaginations at large in the world, but that they do work in framing understandings of the world and in turn making our different worlds, and that particular imaginaries are willfully put to work with political affect and effect" (2014, p. 132). Marketing campaigns in the United States, Canada, and Europe have historically sold The Bahamas as a specific kind of geographic imaginary: the paradise island. This imaginary has always been imbued with colonial tropes of smiling black servitude, the segregation of whiter privileged populations within resort enclaves, and tropical Edenic nature that exists outside of the civilized world. The paradise island imaginary has long been the basis of the Bahamian tourism brand in the global travel market, a brand that Bahamian scholar Ian Strachan calls "paradise and plantation" (2002), but that is referred to as "sun, sand, and sea" within the tourism industry itself (Cameron & Gatewood, 2008).

Since at least the 1950s, this imaginary-as-brand has animated the spread of exploitative capital in the archipelago via tourism, leading to the development of large hotels, the dredging of waterfront for large cruise ships and yachts, and the expansion of the nation's international airport to accommodate more and larger planes. In addition to the growth of the industry, the Bahamian scholar Angelique Nixon argues that this travel imaginary has supported a white, upper class, heteronormative, and Christian traveler as the most desired traveler for the Bahamian tourist market (2015). Thus, the paradise island imaginary has been an effective tool for continuing the colonial segregation of space via white supremacy in New Providence, even after independence in 1973. Wealthier, whiter residents and visitors dominate stretches of coastal territory in resorts and gated communities, while the majority of the black and less-white population live in land-locked subdivisions, aspiring to "good hotel jobs" serving that coastal flux of visitors (Johnson, 1997).

As a result of the success of the paradise island imaginary, most tourists do not yet think of farming when they think of The Bahamas (Cleare, 2007). Both Ian Strachan and Angelique Nixon argue that the standard Bahamian (and Caribbean) tourism product is evacuated of history, obscuring the environmental impacts of mass visitation while enabling neocolonial relations of servitude and mastery between island "hosts" and visiting "guests". And yet, as members of the travel industry observe, the Bahamian paradise island brand may be weakening in the face of competing beach destinations entering the global and regional market for travelers (Moore, 2010). After drops following the World Trade Center attacks of 11 September 2001, and the recent Great Recession, visitor numbers are stable, but they are not substantially growing (Trading Economics, 2016).[4]

Recent events show that the paradise island brand has further cracks. The Bahamas, like many small islands, is already experiencing the stresses of global environmental change. These are the "Anthropocene challenges" that are increasing the country's vulnerability and decreasing its resilience: sea level rise, shifting weather patterns, increased storm intensity and frequency, overfishing, coral degradation, dependence on petroleum-based energy, over-development, loss of fresh water, loss of species, increased presence of regional migrants and refugees, and population increase (Moore, 2016). For example, sea level rise and coastal erosion leads to shrinking coastlines, causing the government to spend on sand replenishment at popular beaches (Campbell, 2012). Further, as local seafood becomes scarcer due to the consumptive habits of tourists and locals, prices for seafood products rise, rapidly outpacing that of imported seafood

in grocery stores and disappearing from hotel menus (personal observation and communication from Nassau residents and members of the hotel industry). These are just some ways that the paradise island imaginary-as-brand is threatened by the realities of global environmental insecurity.

But instead of being overtaken by these realities, fears of global anthropogenic change are rearticulated within some tourism ventures that are strategically utilizing such realities as opportunities for more tourism-based enterprise. And in addition to the all-inclusive resort with its extreme consumption of resources and energy, its extreme output of waste, and its importation of industrial scale labor, materials, and food, we now have examples of "sustainable" hotels and visitor experiences that are designed to impart a more place-based authenticity. This is not necessarily ecotourism [which is explicitly based on environmental and cultural preservation and education (Honey, 1999; Weaver, 2001)], but it is intentionally greener tourism than mass tourism, branded under the sign of sustainability and implicitly framed by the Anthropocene idea. What is now known as "sustainable tourism" in this context emerges from a central irony: the expansion of tourism into new spaces exacerbates global environmental change, and at the same time the tourism industry creates products and imaginaries that stem from ideas about global environmental change to accumulate more space for more tourism.

In light of such events, scholars of tourism point out that international tourism is evolving in creative ways (Mostafanezhad, Norum, Shelton, & Thompson-Carr, 2016). Thus, the need to understand the significance of rebranded tourist imaginaries for emergent Anthropocene inspired travel markets – like the small island farm – is what brought me to the center of New Providence, my resort wear exchanged for sturdy shoes and shorts. I have been studying events at the intersection of ecology and tourism in The Bahamas as an anthropologist for over a decade. My observations here stem from accumulated research visits since 2007 and on specific ethnographic experiences with a dive voluntourist program concerning coral restoration in 2014 and on an organic agritourist farm in 2016.

This piece is a conceptual exploration beyond the standard research article, although it does provide ethnographic evidence. The work presented here is the result of a "situated adventure" in emergent practices, an attempt to disarticulate adventure and exploration from their colonial referents (including anthropology) and reclaim them as tools for decolonizing tourism studies. Adventures are journeys of inherent risk and uncertainty in which the outcome is not known at the outset. For tourism studies, adventures also imply the commodification and domestication of risk and exoticism within experiential business ventures that attract tourist dollars. Situated adventures (adapting Haraway, 1997) are, therefore, a mode of engagement with destinations that allow the tourism scholar to experience given tourism products and ventures (the line between scholar and tourist has always been quite blurry after all) while necessarily observing how such products align with asymmetrical neocolonial realities to transform local space and place into something new in ways that risk reinforcing those asymmetries. Situated adventures force readers to rethink and relearn their vacations. Political ecologists of contemporary tourism should experiment with this reflexive mode of engagement.

While inspired by a number of literatures, this article most immediately builds off of the work of Ian Strachan and Angelique Nixon who, among others, have been instrumental in decolonizing the paradise island imaginary in the Caribbean, demanding that scholars recognize the colonial legacies embedded in that tourism product while pushing to create alternative realities and imaginaries. The discussion builds off of this work of cultural analysis, combining a critical reading of tourism with a political ecological interest in the inequities stemming from particular intersections of nature and capital. Coinciding with the goals of this special issue, this article examines local imaginaries, materialities, and opportunities recreated in a tourism dependent economy in an era of global environmental change. The goal is to demonstrate a reflexive mode of political ecological research for the Anthropocene equipped to tackle emergent practices and

ironies at the intersection of postcolonial tourism, environmental conservation, and sustainable development.

The remainder of this article explores Anthropocene space as an emergent travel product stemming from the Anthropocene island imaginary-as-brand. These concepts are grounded in two emergent "farm" examples from the island of New Providence, exploring them both above and below the surface of the sea. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications of these adventures in sustainable tourism for The Bahamas, the Caribbean, and tourism in general while returning to Strachan and Nixon's concern about alternatives to neocolonial tourism in the region.

Reimagining and rebranding space

The Anthropocene is a technical term generated by Earth scientists to label the ubiquitous impacts of human activities on the planet's biogeochemical systems (Crutzen & Schwägerl, 2011; Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000). The idea demands the recognition that humans are now the primary force behind most planetary change across scales. The scientific relevance of the term is something geologists have been debating for seventeen years, and they are approaching a conclusive vote as to whether the Anthropocene will replace the Holocene as the designation for the planet's geological present (Carrington, 2016). But beyond the immediate significance of the vote to scientifically validate the term, the idea itself is proliferating, allowing for multiple framings of the stakes and multiple possible responses. In other words, there are multiple Anthropocenes at work in the world today (Moore, 2015c). What matters here is the creative work of the *idea* (in all its guises from climate change to biodiversity loss to the global fresh water crisis) to raise awareness about anthropogenesis as a major component of our current reality. To put it bluntly, "wild" is dead. "Pristine" is passé. "Untouched" is unreal.[5] And crucially, the Anthropocene idea has helped propel the widespread shift in understandings of the relationship between nature and culture currently underway [albeit a highly uneven shift (see Chakrabarty, 2013; Haraway, 2016; Latour, 2013)].

As this special issue shows, there are multiple approaches to the intersection of tourism and the Anthropocene. One under-appreciated event that links the Anthropocene idea to tourism is the emergent phenomena of Anthropocene travel imaginaries as the basis for place-based travel brands. Generally, ecotourism is a popular mode of tourist travel tied to a political environmentalism that has produced familiar travel imaginaries based on viewing wilderness and wildlife (West & Carrier, 2004). The end goal is to market spectacular imaginaries to "save" pristine wilderness (and pristine cultures) from destruction via their entry into tourist markets [though results have often missed the mark (also see West, 2006)]. Similarly, emergent modes of sustainable travel, development design, place-based travel, labor practice, and spatial re-imagination are now implicitly tied to the Anthropocene idea via new kinds of travel imaginaries. But the purpose of these travel products is not salvage. Instead, "sustainable tourism" is purported to uphold development and economic growth itself in this increasingly precarious world [see the United Nations, which declared 2017 the Year of Sustainable Tourism (UNWTO, 2016)]. It is now possible in this context to sell time-sensitive adventures with new "change adapted" practices in locales of heightened anthropogenic significance. In other words, the travel industry can now use revised spatial imaginaries to brand Anthropocene space in markets for sustainable travel.

Along with the paradise island, the *small* island and its vulnerable systems have recently become alternative tourism imaginaries for the Anthropocene. Islands have played an important role in the geographic materializations of science and capital, especially in the colonial context where islands served as "natural" laboratory spaces for experiments with social and ecological systems, trade, and various forms of production and consumption (Baldacchino, 2006; Grove, 1996; Mintz, 1985). The geographic imaginaries that traditionally articulate tropical islands for

Euro-American publics stem from the age of scientific exploration and subsequent colonial accumulative practices, and these imaginaries have branded islands with a sense of heroism, adventure, exoticism, utopianism, and Edenic mastery. The paradise island is one form of island imaginary that proved to be particularly seductive for the Post WWII international tourism industry, especially as a brand platform for tropical island regions (Sheller, 2003). However, the recognition of the Anthropocene idea is inspiring an update to the paradise island tourism product. Once valued as laboratories for evolutionary processes or the exploitation of resources and imagined as an exotic locale for travel, small islands are now also valued as vulnerable geological formations, supporting vulnerable forms of human and nonhuman life in the face of anthropogenic change (Moore, 2010).

Revised imaginaries can, therefore, recreate space in the Anthropocene, but this is not the wholesale transformation of the imaginaries that animate island travel. Islands are still envisioned as Romantic laboratory spaces in the postcolonial context of anthropogenic global change. However, the Earth sciences are the prime movers of this Anthropocene awareness, acting across scales, though most recognizable in bodies like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Their work is politically institutionalized in international climate negotiations through small island voting blocks, such as the Alliance Of Small Islands States (AOSIS, 2015). Small islands are now characterized by their vulnerability, social and ecological fragility, and lack of security (Lazrus, 2012; Moore, 2010) and re-imagined in policy circles as material formations of socioecological risk. They have become a biogeographic imaginary for the Anthropocene – an Anthropocene space.

There are other examples of the reformulation of spatial knowledge, geographic imaginaries, and material practices at the intersection of the Earth sciences and transnational policy, including the Arctic and Antarctic, large forested areas such as the South American Rainforest, Andean and Himalayan glaciers, the deep oceans, and many more. These biogeographic formations now signify the force of anthropogenesis, risk, and uncertainty just as they are remade to signify resilience, adaptation, and sustainability in the face of anthropogenic change. As an emergent phenomenon, small island spaces are now designed for multiple forms of entrepreneurial Anthropocene enterprise.

These generalities are a scaffold for understanding current events, but they require more specification at the local level. The Bahamian cases described below don't involve a monolithic "tourism industry" or the direct involvement of the Ministry of Tourism or tourism developers. Instead, the examples stem from a small-scale form of entrepreneurial tourism wherein individuals and organizations attempt to capitalize on and reinvent emergent travel trends. These actors are on the vanguard of the larger travel industry, reshaping preferences that may eventually become aspects of mainstream travel brands, even as they reinforce some of the most problematic conditions of Caribbean tourism. Further, the term "Anthropocene" is not one that comes up often in The Bahamas and it is not yet a term used within the tourism industry, even at the narrow cutting edge of new travel markets. Instead, terms like "sustainability", "adaptation", and "innovation" are far more common. This language is not new, but when applied to emergent tourism products, such as the farms described below, these terms help to discursively reframe the character of a destination and physically reshape its visitable space within an Anthropocene imaginary.

In sum, the specific Bahamian examples that follow are two early attempts to sell Anthropocene space as a sustainable tourism venture. Once we start to look, we will find many destinations all over the world utilizing scientifically-informed Anthropocene imaginaries, even if this term itself is not yet widely used. These reimagined spaces are gradually becoming more mainstream brand components for tourism.

Farm fantasies: agritourism and coral nurseries

To sell Anthropocene space, potential travel entrepreneurs must first tap into the global conversation about anthropogenic change and align their product through design or marketing with a

recognizable Anthropocene imaginary, such as the small island space and its attendant vulnerabilities. One visible area of international policy interest within the context of small islands and global change is food security (Ganpat & Isaac, 2015; Samoa, 2014). Islands have long been associated with crises of food security, but since anthropogenic global change reached the top of the international policy agenda in the late twentieth century, many novel solutions to the problems of food security, self-sufficiency, vulnerability, and sustainability have been proposed for islands in the face of climate change, overfishing, population sprawl, and other Anthropocene issues. Interventions in island food security range from accumulative "green grabbing" to place-based social movements for equitable relationships within food systems (Aragon, 2011; Torgerson, 2010). In The Bahamas, some tourism entrepreneurs have settled on farming as their entrée into the nascent market for Anthropocene-animated "sustainable" travel products.

Farms – with imaginaries of localization, cultural heritage, sustainability, healthy processes and products, and community – are primed to be the latest thing in niche-to-mainstream travel products. The term "farming" is used loosely here to mean both terrestrial ventures in agriculture as well as marine ventures in coral restoration. These practices have many differences, but in both instances farming is a practice that requires the material cultivation of living produce via the maintenance of physical and social space that has been organized for that purpose. Farm spatial products rely on the design and maintenance of a complex set of interconnected relationships with nonhuman organisms, organic and inorganic processes, and social dynamics including post-colonial formations of race and class in the Bahamian context. Terrestrial agriculture is an emergent island tourism product and a good place to begin.

Agriculture is not usually an explicit part of most paradise island imagery, but it is of course a part of the familiar paradise *imaginary*.[6] As Ian Strachan points out, the tourist expects (implicitly) to experience the lifestyle of the plantation from the perspective of the white plantation owner, with the accompaniments of smiling, local hotel staff who cater to their needs and prepare their meals (2002). As mentioned, international tourist arrivals to The Bahamas number in the millions, annually, and visitors expect Bahamian dishes to be available in hotel restaurants and restaurant buffets that seem to feature local fruits, vegetables, and animal products, even when everything may be imported. Beyond the edges of tourist perception, the island resort has come to stand in for the island plantation.

Bahamian agriculture has also been implicated in tourism in the form of heightened food insecurity. Due to regional trade imbalances, the expense of farm land, the diminished social value of local products compared to imported products, and the high input costs of farming, agriculture has been in a decades-long backslide in The Bahamas with low entry into the sector as youth pursue service-based careers (Boyce, 2014; Hedden, 2011). The country cannot feed its population on local farm produce, let alone the influx of tourist arrivals. This means that hotel restaurants primarily feed tourists imported "tropical" foods: pineapples from Hawaii, mangoes from Mexico, limes from South America (personal observation). Food imports are now approaching $1 billion USD annually (this number comes from several interviews with Bahamian agriculture officials), resulting in a related carbon output into the atmosphere stemming from all the shipments of consumable goods that arrive to the country via cargo ship and jet plane. This also means increased waste as imported foods are packaged in plastics that become pollution in the ocean and wetlands if they manage to avoid the brimming (and occasionally burning) New Providence landfill (Dorsett, 2017). Inadequate local production only exacerbates processes of anthropogenic global environmental change.

The linkages between agriculture and tourism in The Bahamas are obvious, but there are not many positive linkages. Tourism consumes large amounts of food and water, and it requires the importation of large amounts of foods that fit tourist expectations for quality, variety, and familiarity. Cultural critics point out that the country's dependence on tourism, coupled with postcolonial feelings of national inadequacy, have privileged imported products over local products, resulting in a Bahamian preference for imported foods and tastes (Bethel, 2008). This has lead to

the privileging of island space for tourism development over farm production, especially on New Providence, and to a disinterest in local products.[7] Local produce (onions, thyme, tomatoes, etc.) is sold in some grocery chains, but it is not often labeled, and its origins are often times unidentifiable.

Some farmers promote local farms and produce for Bahamian consumption, hoping to break the dependency on imports. These farms participate in farmers markets and healthy food campaigns. One farm in particular has moved in this direction while creating a very direct linkage with the tourism industry, offering farm space and produce as a destination itself. The farmer who owns this farm believes that his island farm is primed for sustainable agritourism.

Back to my cloudy day "out west" on the farm. On that day I learn that this small acreage is owned by a Bahamian entrepreneur from a prominent white family who made his fortune in finance in the United States years ago. In an interview, he tells me that he now lives "back home" in The Bahamas as a gentleman farmer on New Providence, utilizing land purchased from a wealthy white colonial landowner. I observe that the farmland is close to two infamous gated communities, one a historical repository of white wealth and holdover from colonial days, the other a more recent high-end second (or third) home destination designed to be a modern version of the first enclave. Residents and tourists from these locales, along with yachting tourists passing through the country, are the target clientele. They learn about the farm via promotional stories in glossy regional lifestyle magazines, and especially from travel websites, social media, and word of mouth.

This farmer explicitly doesn't grow the staple crops of the traditional Bahamian farm (pigeon peas, goat pepper, thyme, plum tomato, banana, pumpkin, citrus, etc.). Instead, he grows luxury produce for wealthy expatriates and tourists seeking lunch and something a little different from the typical restaurant. When I first meet the farmer we stand in a field of organic arugula in view of his compost bins, hydroponic micro-greens, expanding aquaponic green houses, and farm-to-table restaurant. During our interview he proudly explains that his micro-greens sell for $60 USD per pound. I discover for myself that a lunch of fresh juice, salad, grains, and fish or chicken protein costs nearly $30, a high price even for a tourist destination, compared to the places many Bahamians frequent, matched only by places on the island that cater to affluent crowds. "This is the future of agriculture in these islands", the farmer told me adamantly as we sat at an al-fresco table, "growing high-value crops for an upscale market and welcoming visitors directly to the farm as agricultural tourists". He was incredibly serious, looking me in the eye while stating, "there is no other way to sustain local food production here".

This well-informed farm owner markets his island farm as an Anthropocene space (without using the term himself) by acknowledging the fraught conditions of small island food security in an era of planetary uncertainty and promoting his innovative solutions to the problem of island underproduction. Remotely, via the farm website, and in person, via the farm restaurant, visitors tour the aquaponic green houses to marvel at the closed system engineering in which tanks of red tilapia fertilize water pumped to vertically grown produce with minimal waste or chemical input and the capacity to produce far more product per square foot than conventional farming. One article about the farm in a regional online tourism promotional website states, "They're living your dream: the beach at their door, lots of sun, and their very own organic farm. And they've invited you along for the day – and for dinner" (source not provided to protect anonymity).

In our earnest conversation, the farmer stressed that the growing island population could only hold out for days or weeks without receiving shipments of imported foodstuffs because no one is farming what land there is, and there is not much undeveloped land left on New Providence due to the intensifying population density. "What do you think will happen if the boats stop coming?" he asked. The farm is self-sustaining, but "they will come here with guns and take everything we have". His attitude is that if the government would only take his success seriously – and encourage other farmers to adopt his methods while building linkages to the

luxury tourism industry – then the country might yet be saved. His farm tourism product is a precarious oasis of sustainable innovation in a dystopian, anthropogenic, postcolonial world. Welcome, affluent visitors. Get the micro-greens while you can.

However, this cynicism is not evidenced from other members of the island's agricultural community who mentioned this farm to me during interviews when asked for examples of agritourism and sustainable farming. Members of the government tour the farm looking for inspiration for agricultural planning, paying attention to see if wealthy visitors will vote with their feet and leave gated enclaves for local sustainable produce. Within the NGO community on New Providence, this farm is the most commonly-cited example of innovation and the future of island-adapted agriculture combined with tourism as bedfellows.

If tourists do not yet think directly of farming when they think of The Bahamas, they are not yet likely to think about work. "Sun, sand, and sea" is synonymous with the "Isles of June" mythology of indolent occupants of the tropics (Bell, 1934). Yet when I started to ask around about coral reef restoration as a new tourist activity, I received several requests to work: specifically, requests from local NGOs and dive operations to volunteer my labor, or even to pay to labor, in coral nurseries. And I do work.

One blazing and cloudless Sunday, I find myself on the New Providence coast, even farther out west. I sit on the dock of a large local dive shop along with a willing student, assisting a representative of a local NGO in the material preparation for a coral restoration project. Further down the dock we see dive boats coming in and out of the marina, loading and unloading small groups of tourists in swimming gear. The boats are bedecked with tanks and wetsuits. Dive instructors corral clients onto the boats, coordinating gear while keeping spirits and enthusiasms up. Tourists of all ages arrive in groups and leave the dive shop via large vans emblazoned with the shop's name and logo. These vans are familiar sights around the large hotels of the north shore.

As volunteers, we have been tasked with building coral nursery "trees" out of PVC pipe, fishing filament, and blue plastic glue. The NGO employee demonstrates how to produce a tree in an assembly line process: glue the pre-cut PVC arms to the pre-cut PVC trunks, attach the pre-cut fishing line to the arms, thread a rope through the center of the trunk, and attach it to a small buoy, making sure all knots are secured with glue. The finished trees, also known as "coral propagation units", will be anchored to the sea floor by more volunteers in a defined site with amenable conditions, and hard-coral fragments will be hung on loops of fishing line. Forty coral fragments can grow on a coral tree at one time, and the NGO plans to anchor dozens of trees offshore in a predesignated nursery area marked by buoys on the surface of the water. The main nursery for this project is sited on the southwestern end of New Providence, in an area near the industrial pier where the nation's fossil fuel supply is regularly delivered.

Like the terrestrial farm, this nursery is not located in a traditional tourist area. The nursery is sited in a working coastal marine-scape shaped by cargo, near-shore fishing, and historical littoral relations. In the Pre-Colombian past, Arawak, Lucayan, and Tiano populations settled in the same area, relying on the fruits of the ocean. During the colonial slave period, African slaves from nearby plantations utilized the near-shore reefs and coasts for subsistence fishing (Clifton Heritage National Park, 2016). In the early 2000s, the coastal area was saved from real estate development and converted to a national historical site to preserve its historical plantation ruins, eventually opening for visitation in 2009, while the offshore area was preserved within a marine management area in 2015. The nursery is submerged within that management area.

As we work we sweat and talk about the relationship between the NGO and the dive shop that has developed around coral restoration and "voluntourism". "The hard-corals here are critically endangered", the NGO rep explained. "If you have any capacity to help at all, you should be helping". His fervency stems from the decline in hard-coral species that hold Caribbean reef aggregations together, like Staghorn (*Acropora cervicornis*) and Elkhorn (*Acropora palmata*) in recent decades. He is Bahamian, also from a prominent white family, and he too lived abroad for

years, returning home to stay close to the marine environment he loves. He believes coral decline is anthropogenic, echoing the rhetoric of international coral scientists and the nascent coral restoration industry (Coral Restoration Foundation, 2017; Hughes et al., 2017).

Like declines in food security tied to the effects of planetary anthropogenesis in increasingly insecure locales, the decline of coral reefs has been tied to human activities, including tourism. Rising ocean temperatures and subsequent ocean acidification are exacerbated by an increase in marine debris and siltification from dredging and coastal building as well as offshore runoff, waste, and pollution. As a result, there is an internationally recognized coral reef crisis, and corals are believed to be decreasing, bleaching, and generally declining in health and resilience (Madin & Madin, 2015). Hard-corals are said to be in retreat around New Providence, and the large reef stands and coral gardens of childhood memory are gone. "We have killed off a lot of our corals with coastal development", the NGO employee observed as he glued pipes, "and now it's time for tourism to help restore the reefs. And this is a great idea", he went on, "because its value added for the industry". In other words, as a result of the international conversation about anthropogenic coral decline, along with local recognition that this decline affects the coral-based marine tourism industry, there is an emergent market for coral restoration-based marine tourism products. Tourists can now pay to labor to maintain coral nursery spaces to restore reefs that future dive tourists will one day pay to explore.

The dive shop sells restoration certification dive packages for about $200 USD per day. Tourists book certification days on the shop website, featuring images of divers recording data about coral fragments and posing in masked selfies with coral trees. Dive tourists come in small groups from the coastal hotels for prearranged sessions with a certified trainer. Travelers who might otherwise choose to dive on reefs with variable degrees of health (whose presence may exacerbate declining reef health), or on the submerged wreckage of ships or airplanes, can now choose to become "coral care specialists". My student volunteered to take the course (I paid), and she explained that it consisted of a morning classroom session about coral biology and conservation followed by an afternoon of cleaning algae off of coral trees with sturdy brushes in the underwater nurseries managed by the NGO. She confirmed that the dive tourists that sign up for these certification days are relatively affluent, generally EuroAmerican, and much whiter than the Bahamian population as a whole.

Potential tourist products like the agritourist farm and the coral restoration dive package tap into international conversations about anthropogenesis and into prevailing geographic imaginaries-as-brands by advertising designed experiences, like touring aquaponic greenhouses and diving in forests of coral propagation units, primarily online and via client social media.[8] The farm offers locally produced, organically farmed meals *in situ* at the site of production while the dive shop offers a place-based, hands on, educational dive experience. They both sell a "sustainable tourism" product in an alternative island space, far from the beaches and gated communities of the coast, in such a way that their products now continually stabilize and reshape the space for tourist visitation. The dive operation does this by advertising their hard-coral nursery (via website) as the only place in the Caribbean (a vulnerable small island region) to offer such a volun-tourist experience. In this marketing strategy, The Bahamas (a vulnerable small island nation) becomes a significant example of "eco-friendly conservation" and innovation within anthropogenically modified socioecological systems. The dive shop becomes the only means for tourists to access that example. These Bahamian farms are now spatial products that have a calculable value (thousands of farm lunches sold and dozens of coral restoration certifications awarded annually) within an imaginary-as-brand shaped by emergent understandings of anthropogenesis and a travel market for meaning.[9]

These two brief cases of emergent Anthropocene tourism products in New Providence, Bahamas, exemplify how space can be reproduced and sold in reimagined island markets. These island "farms" (terrestrial and marine) are important local sites of material and symbolic connection between larger practices and processes that span scales; they are active experiments with

neoliberal capital in the form of tourism, local sovereignty, complex island socioecologies, and social justice and ethics on multiple levels. Both Strachan and Nixon might observe that these spaces, as promoted and used by the farm and dive shop, ignore and, therefore, erase colonial and slave history in The Bahamas, even as they benefit from the tourism cachet of The Bahamas that is one legacy of that history. And so, while both sites attempt to sell Anthropocene-worthy alternatives to the mass tourist imaginary of paradise, even these emergent versions of sustainable tourism do not address issues of race, class, and colonialism in their sites in such as way as to make Anthropocene Island spaces viable ethical alternatives to the typical Caribbean tourist product.

Conclusion: adventures in and out of sustainable tourism

The conveners of this edited volume are right to recognize the emergent linkages between the Anthropocene and tourism. This is an understudied area of thought and action that has real consequences for reshaping tourist modes of production and consumption, social relations between populations of human and nonhuman beings, and spatial politics. Further, a political ecology of tourism for the Anthropocene must do what political ecology does so well: follow forms of power as they manifest across scales, assessing the changing relationship between politics and the more than human world (Biersack, 2006).

This article and this special issue should stand as examples of a political ecological approach to the study of tourism in and for the Anthropocene capacious enough to recognize how emergent destinations interact with existing dynamics in specific locales. This article has characterized this approach as a situated adventure in sustainable tourism. The brief examples included here signal that we are encountering an emergent phase of tourist travel in which circulating imaginaries tied to the Anthropocene idea have real material effects in specific locations. Again, this is not strictly ecotourism, or at least not the mainstream brand of ecotourism of the 1990s. Instead, the farmer and the NGO employee see their farms as innovative examples for the sustainable redesign of the tourism product of The Bahamas. They are remediated sustainable tourism schemes for the Anthropocene. Situated adventuring (again, always a fraught business) through tourism spaces means exploring traveling ideas stemming from authoritative realms like global change science (the Anthropocene) as they combine on the ground with geographic imaginaries (the paradise island) to become revised imaginaries-as-brands (the small island), enabling material recreations of space, including the people and life forms that constitute that space (terrestrial and marine island "farms").

A political ecology of the Anthropocene must also pay close attention to the nexus of science and capital that drives so many interventions in the lives of others (human and non). Other examples of this nexus include biotech, geoengineering, and any number of commercially viable systems modeling projects. The nexus that links science and tourism has long been studied as it pertains to nature conservation via park enclosure and earlier forms of ecotourism, but the sustainable tourism products of the Anthropocene provide an opportunity for closer scrutiny. The examples described here are best understood as collaborative synergies producing forms of value within Anthropocene tourism products.

This article repeatedly refers to "*re*" stabilization or "*re*" imagination because the Anthropocene idea reworks prior spatial imaginaries and stabilizations of place. As implied above, islands are now prized by Earth scientists as the "canaries in the coal mine" of global change, revising earlier understandings of islands as microcosms of global processes and imbuing these understandings with a sense of peril.[10] The paradise and plantation model of sun, sand, and sea tourism already relied on colonial island exoticism and the sense that islands are exceptional spaces of ease and encounter, but marketing strategies and brand campaigns (not to mention funding calls for scientific research) must be continually revised lest they become

stagnant, and the Bahamian Ministry of Tourism continually explores the revamping of its national tourism product.

Beyond the early Anthropocene ventures described above, sustainable tourism is now a strategy that looks likely to bear fruit for the Ministry. The Director General for Tourism said recently that "as a small island developing state, The Bahamas must consider the increasing competition in the global tourism market, and act to ensure that the tourism industry remains strong and competitive. We expect that the … focus on sustainability, along with tourism management, strategy and marketing, will enhance the future of our tourism industry" (Deveaux, 2015, sentence five). Sustainability here has multiple meanings and purposes.

The overt meaning of sustainability as it is used by the Ministry aligns with the definition of sustainable development popularized in the Brundtland Report: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2016). But a political ecologist must repeat the oft asked question: sustainability for whom? In the trend setting cases I explore here, what is made sustainable are island travel markets and divisions of space, life, and labor for the tourism industry. In other words, the Anthropocene idea can be an accumulation strategy for the tourism industry that perpetuates powerful forms of entrenched inequity under the guise of global sustainability.

The dive shop is selling a place-based product: the small forest of "trees" that is their offshore coral nursery. That product is reliant on the spatial imaginaries of the global change sciences that situate The Bahamas and the Caribbean within a framework of small island vulnerability, endangerment, and resilience. The NGO that hired the representative to collaborate with the dive operation in the creation of the nursery is part of an international network of scientists and researchers whose mission is to evaluate the anthropogenic origins of global coral degradation and to devise novel means to ameliorate that degradation. This is not in and of itself the accumulation of value, which comes in many forms. However, these networks can collaboratively enable accumulation strategies when they promote global narratives over local relationships and advocate for market-based solutions without any deep understanding of the social and historical context of markets.

Political ecologists studying coral restoration as a form of sustainable tourism anywhere should mark how historical coastal activities like reef fishing and other complex local ties to coral beings and reef-based processes are erased within conservation rhetorics that amplify the "degradation of critically endangered hard-corals". They should notice how working marine places become marked as de facto dive space where independent fishing livelihoods and post emancipation subsistence practices are slowly replaced with consumptive tourist "labor". They should explain how selling coral restoration dive packages to tourists becomes a paradoxical solution to the ecological damage caused by tourist populations and infrastructure. In sum, what is enabled by the imaginaries of global change animating nursery spaces for coral restoration is the potential accumulation of coral knowledge, marine territory, local spatial imaginaries, the meaning of work, and prior local relationships to coral reefs. This is just a taste of what can be accumulated. Erasure or repurposing of these prior forms of value helps to generate capital from the coral restoration dive packages for the dive operation and for the owners of regional tourism products. Money in the form of profit is just one materialization of these integrated forms of accumulation.

On regional agritourist farms the story is similar. Political ecologists studying this form of tourism in the Caribbean should follow how farmers tap into circulating narratives about small island vulnerability and food security in the face of global environmental change. They should examine how visitors experience red tilapia linked to kale beds in closed aquaponic systems and consume fresh salads of micro-greens as forms of innovation. While tourists are visiting highly designed places, touted as sustainable farms, they are likely not informed that this farm tourism product utilizes migrant labor (Haitian, Jamaican, Central American) and expensive land purchased by the

white colonial elite long ago as an extension of their segregated enclaves. For example, Bahamians cannot labor on farms for a living wage, and they certainly do not have access to land like this. Most Bahamian farmers do not own their land at all, instead leasing it from the government, losing their leases after death. This is a pattern repeated across the region. What is accumulated on the agritourist farm is of course, then, land, but also less-tangible histories of subsistence farming practices within the plantation system, generational relationships to well-loved but low-value crops, and the capacity for farmers who are not wealthy landholders to pass down farms to descendants. The small island farm tourism product has value in part because it symbolizes these histories and romantic notions of self-sufficiency, but a political ecologist knows that this is an enabling illusion that aligns with the prevailing branding of Anthropocene space being sold in markets for sustainable products.

The Anthropocene, as an acknowledgement of multiple drivers of anthropogenic change, is a challenge to the expansion of capital. But it is simultaneously an *outcome* of the historical expansion of capital and an *invitation* for further capital expansion. This is one of the great ironies of the Anthropocene. And the ironies proliferate. Yes, the recognition of the Anthropocene is an ethical challenge for the expansion of tourism (Gren & Huijbens, 2014), but it also invites the creation of new tourist products and markets that can suffocate the radical potential of the idea. This irony is true of all tourism in the context of global environmental change. Local agriculture and local food are prime sites for the expansion of agritourism just as coral restoration and coral nurseries are prime sites for the expansion of voluntourism. "Farms" like this work within prevailing imaginaries as tourism products, regardless of any actual contribution to functional island food systems or coral reef ecologies. These proliferating ironies are evidence that directly linking agriculture or reef restoration and tourism will not automatically lead to improved island security. These ironies must not be ignored. The cases presented here show that if the "island farm" product continues to expand in the Caribbean it could indeed successfully stabilize food systems, produce, and terrestrial and marine space *for the tourism sector*, while potentially leaving islanders across the region in an even more precarious and dependent position than before as more and more space is stabilized for the enjoyment of visitors over the use of local residents.

At this point, it should be clear that neither farmers nor dive operators nor scientists who conduct Anthropocene research are *intentionally* creating tourism products that redesign and repurpose land, knowledge, and relationships towards accumulative ends. The next phase of this research will explore the specific mechanisms by which members of the tourist industry from small scale "farms" to large resort hotels to government tourism offices translate circulating Anthropocene imaginaries into brands and products. While this article has focused primarily on the symbolic and material manifestation of the Anthropocene idea as a reformulation of space for tourism in The Bahamas, the examples presented here also show that these mechanisms are driven in part through processes of virtualism and prosumption tied to the pervasive use of the internet and social media in tourist source populations (Buscher & Igoe, 2013; West & Carrier, 2004). The point here is that political ecologists of tourism seek scholarly adventures that focus on inequities and ironies to counter widespread neocolonial and neoliberal narratives, and political ecologists know that hegemonic structures of accumulation rarely operate on the level of explicit intention. However, Strachan and Nixon remind us that we must demand more from tourism, especially in postcolonial contexts like the Caribbean and The Bahamas.

Strachan's (2002) analysis of the conjoined tropes of paradise and plantation that undergird Bahamian mass tourism within the paradise island imaginary (described above) highlights the inexcusable way that historical forms of inequity are perpetually reconstituted within neocolonial and neoliberal capitalist ventures. Nixon (2015) extends this critique by exploring alternatives to the paradise island brand in the Caribbean, arguing that, paradoxically, tourism can actually combat the denigrating effects of tourism, but *only* if alternative ventures are explicit in their resistance. Her examples of ethical tourism include artists working within a mega-resort complex who produce work that directly represents the fraught relationships Bahamians have with their

national industry, a small-scale cultural tourism venture that pairs tourists with citizens to learn about current social manifestations of past forms of slave resistance, and an annually occurring educational workshop that recruits limited numbers of selected tourists to participate in an exchange of knowledge about colonial history and the African diaspora. Unlike the examples presented above, all of these alternative ventures are led by Caribbean intellectuals who self-identify as black.[11] Following Deborah McLaren, Nixon argues that "any rethinking of tourism must challenge the travel industry at every level" (p. 143).

These two examples of the reproduction of space for sustainable tourism ventures in The Bahamas are indeed a kind of alternative to mass tourism products sold via the paradise island imaginary-as-brand.[12] But as Strachen and Nixon show, they are not yet alternative enough to offer real resistance to the accumulative, exploitative, and supremacist capacities of postcolonial tourism. In order to move beyond this contextual vortex, Caribbean and Bahamian sustainable tourism ventures would have to directly acknowledge the *conjoined ironies* at the heart of tourism itself, educating visitors about their contribution to anthropogenic environmental change as consumers in a given Anthropocene space *as well as* educating them about their contribution as tourists to the perpetuation of histories of racial segregation and class inequality in the region.

The Anthropocene idea is both an implicit brand platform for emergent sustainable tourism products and simultaneously a powerful conceptual enabler of the familiar processes of accumulation, white supremacy, and relationships of visible/invisible labor tied to the global expansion of neoliberal capital in which tourism and science are major players. That fact must not be overlooked in the heady rush to analyze the Anthropocene. These brief examples of future-oriented tourism (small laboratory experiments for tourism we might say, following Magubane (2003) who in turn follows Cooper & Stoler, 1997) have shown that the circulation of new spatial imaginaries generates and stabilizes emergent Anthropocene spaces with real material consequences for the way people do business and the way business effects social relations. And business, as a means of living with and relating to human and nonhuman others by redesigning land and marine space, is always a highly *re*creative process.

Notes

1. For a definition of tourism products, see Jefferson and Lickorish "1991).
2. Bahamian demographic information comes from the CIA Factbook, last updated in 2015 https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bf.html
3. In 2014, tourist arrivals to New Providence were recorded at 3.5 million (Tourism Today, 2014).
4. Current projections do point to modest growth in tourism arrivals (WTTC, "2017), although these projections are based on the development of the Baha Mar Resort and Casino project that has had a very fraught history (Vora, "2017) and which is not yet contributing significantly to growth at the time of this writing.
5. The existence of "wilderness" has been debated for some time, but it takes new shape in the debates around the utility of the Anthropocene idea ((Graef, 2016; Kareiva, Marvier, & Lalasz, 2012; Purdy,((2017)). Anthropocene fever. Aeon. Retrieved from https://aeon.co/essays/should-we-be-suspicious-of-the-anthropocene-idea"2017).
6. This paradise imaginary in The Bahamas has also been documented by Bahamian scholar, Krista Thompson, as "a domesticated version of the tropical environment and society" also known as the "Caribbean Picturesque" created through visual processes of "tropicalization" (Thompson, (2007). An eye for the tropics: Tourism, photography, and framing the Caribbean Picturesque. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press. "2007, quoted in Nixon, (2015). Resisting paradise: Tourism, diaspora, and sexuality in Caribbean culture. Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi. "2015, p. 126)
7. The Bahamian island of Andros has been designated by the government as a site for industrial scale agricultural production and agricultural education, thus far with relatively limited results in terms of offsetting reliance on imports.
8. I do not show or quote actual advertising materials for either product because this would further risk revealing the identities of these operations.
9. There is now an underwater sculpture garden adjacent to the coral nursery that also can be accessed outside of the purview of the dive shop. The nursery itself was damaged in Hurricane Matthew in late 2016 and has yet to be fully restored.

10. There are of course other emblems of anthropogenic global change, for example mammals like the polar bear and whales, and these certainly have a tradition of spurring environmental protest and action (e.g. see Kristoffersen, Norum, & Kramvig, 2016 on the "new whale").
11. The examples Nixon (2015) cites are The Current Art Gallery run by John Cox at the Baha Mar Resort and Casino in The Bahamas (circa 2014), the Bahamian Educulture organization founded by Arlene Nash-Ferguson, and the Blackspace program designed by Erna Brodber in Jamaica.
12. Other examples of Anthropocene spatial products are still few and far between in The Bahamas, but they include ventures like "the Development" in Abaco (Moore, 2015a, see also Moore, 2015b) and the infrastructural design of large resorts that have made attempts to innovate in sustainable energy use and waste recycling.

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Notes on contributor

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